

# The Coconino Sun.

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## WONDERFUL CAVES

### OF THE GRAND CANYON OF THE COLORADO RIVER.

**Their Accidental Discovery—The Beauty of the Interior of the Caves Described by a Visitor.**

The caves of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado river have attracted almost as much attention as the Grand Canyon, with its wonderful scenery. The caves were discovered in 1896.

To a cook named Joseph Gildner, employed in the mining camp of Messrs. Cameron & Berry in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado river belongs the honor of discovering what savants had looked for in vain, although they had every reason to presume that what they sought was in existence, and what geologists have long desired to find, in the hope that some further light might be thrown upon some matters connected with the geological formation of the Grand Canyon, which hitherto could only be conjectured. It has long been contended that if caves could only be discovered some more definite information could be gleaned of the many thousands of feet of strata which it is claimed by geologists have been swept away by erosion from the surface of this platform.

Standing on Clear Creek canyon, a mile below the plateau on which the camp and mines are situated, and looking up at the entrance to this cave, one is filled with vague horror and amazement at the mere thought of anyone venturing to climb along the precipitous

face of the mountain to explore its depths. Even with the aid of a powerful glass it does not seem possible that a chamois or mountain goat could find a foothold there. How the man ever got there in the first instance without a rope or any other assistance and escaped falling down and being dashed to pieces at the base of the rock, a precipitous descent of over 1,000 feet, is a mystery.

The cliff in which this cave was discovered rises almost abruptly from the plateau on which the camp is situated and frowns down menacingly on the canyon below. It is truly a very forbidding object, composed of a dirty reddish limestone formation, and seems to warn the venturesome that death awaits him who would pry too closely into the secrets that nature has so closely guarded in her impenetrable bosom.

A trail has been built to the entrance of the cave that anyone can walk along without danger, and a platform six feet wide has been built at the mouth of the cave. The entrance has been cleared away so that a man can almost walk erect into it.

To describe it as a cave is not literally correct. It is rather an intricate series of caves, branching out one from the other and extending in every direction under the mountains. The first cave or compartment is fully 300 feet long and of varying height, extending from about ten feet in some places to eighty or ninety feet in others, and the view presented to the beholder is almost sufficient to take one's breath away. Pendant from the ceiling and the sides of the cave are the most beautiful formations of stalactite, and the